

New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission
Generic Investigation Into Utility Poles
Docket No. DM 05-172
UES Response to Commission Staff's Fourth Set of Data Requests

Request No. Staff 4-3

Electrics: Please provide a copy of the construction standards that govern the use of electric space on a pole.

Response:

Unitil has hundreds of pages of construction standards governing all types of electric construction. These include framing details, conductors, equipment and other uses of the electric space.

Please see Unitil Standard 1-2-1, included as Attachment UES-Staff 4-3, which provides the Joint Pole Space Allocation Table.

Person Responsible: Raymond A. Letourneau Jr.

Date: May 12, 2006

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Request No. Staff 4-6

Electrics, Verizon, municipalities & NHDOT: Please provide procedures and actual practices for municipalities' or their subcontractors' placement, replacement, maintenance and repair of municipal communication equipment in reserved space on the poles.

Response:

Unitil does not currently have formal procedures. Generally, most municipalities place their communication cables on the poles without notification to Unitil. If we are notified of a pending installation, the procedure involves a field review of the proposed attachment to ensure adequate space is available, to ensure NESC clearances are maintained, and to develop make ready estimates if applicable. Unitil will also discuss the need to ensure that the work performed is by a qualified contractor.

It is also important to note that Unitil has been working with Local Government Center and municipalities to develop improved procedures and processes when attaching to our poles.

Person Responsible: Scott D. Wade, Dale Nudd

Date: May 12, 2006

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Request No. Staff 4-7

Electrics & VZ: Please provide a sample of all joint ownership agreements or IOPs that recognize reserved municipal space on poles.

Response:

A complete copy of the Unitil/Verizon Joint Ownership Agreement and Intercompany Operating Procedures was provided in bulk Attachment Staff-UES 1-22.

Specific provisions responsive to the question include Article 6 and IOP #5, copies of which are provided as Attachment UES-Staff 4-7.

Person Responsible: Raymond A. Letourneau Jr.

Date: May 12, 2006

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Request No. Staff 4-8

Electrics & VZ: Please provide the procedure, policy, joint ownership agreement or IOP that permits Verizon to reserve a specific space on each pole.

Response:

A complete copy of the Unitil/Verizon Joint Ownership Agreement and Intercompany Operating Procedures was provided in bulk Attachment Staff-UES 1-22.

The specific IOP responsive to the question is IOP #5 Assigned Space. This was provided with Request No. Staff 4-7. See Attachment UES-Staff 4-7.

Person Responsible: Raymond A. Letourneau, Jr.

Date: May 12, 2006

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Request No. Staff 4-9

Electrics & VZ: Please provide the procedure and actual practice for assessing make-ready costs on poles when municipalities attach their communication equipment.

Response:

Unitil does not currently have formal procedures. Generally, most municipalities place their communication cables on the poles without notification to Unitil. If we are notified of a pending installation, the procedure involves a field review of the proposed attachment to ensure adequate space is available, to ensure NESC clearances are maintained, and to develop make ready estimates if applicable. Unitil will also discuss the need to ensure that the work performed is by a qualified contractor.

It is also important to note that Unitil has been working with Local Government Center and municipalities to develop improved procedures and processes when attaching to our poles.

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Request No. Staff 4-10

Electrics & VZ: Referencing your response to Staff 3-15, please identify all municipalities currently using space reserved for municipal purposes on poles for which you have sole or joint ownership or a joint use interest, for copper wire or other communications, including safety and emergency communications among municipality offices, police, fire and others

Response:

Unitil pole inventory records do not contain information regarding attachments by municipalities. However, as a result of our day-to-day field observations and past and present work with municipals, we are aware that the following municipalities use this space:

Concord
Penacook
Exeter
Hampton
Seabrook
Stratham

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Request No. Staff 4-11

Electrics & VZ: Please provide the policies and actual practices relating to any restrictions on the type of facilities or communication equipment that may be attached to poles by municipalities in the communication space.

Response:

Unitil does not currently have policies or standard practices relating to restrictions on the type of facilities or communication equipment that may be attached to poles by municipalities.

Our main concern is to ensure that adequate NESC clearances are maintained, that the facilities are installed by a qualified contractor, and that the reliability and engineering constraints, such as an increased structural burden on the pole or compliance with code clearance requirements are maintained.

Please also refer to Article 6 of the Unitil-Verizon Joint Operating Agreement. A copy of this provision is attached to the response to Staff 4-7.

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Request No. Staff 4-12

Electrics & VZ: Please provide the practice by which space on the poles reserved for municipal purposes is included, or excluded, for the rate base calculation.

Response:

At this point, the Company does not maintain municipal pole attachment records in its inventory or plant accounting systems, nor do we know how many municipal pole attachments currently exist on our system. In keeping with past precedent, and as noted UES' current base rate filing in DE 05-178, there is no rate base exclusion of the space on poles that is reserved for, or used by, municipal entities. Therefore, this portion of the pole is included in utility plant in service in rate base.

Person Responsible: Robyn Tafoya

Date: May 12, 2006

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Request No. Staff 4-13

Electrics & VZ: Please provide your policy regarding licensees on poles who have over lashed new facilities to their own facilities or the facilities of others already installed on the poles.

Response:

Unitil has no policy on this matter, except concerning safety, reliability and engineering constraints, such as an increased structural burden on the pole or compliance with code clearance requirements.

Person Responsible: Raymond A. Letourneau, Jr.

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Request No. Staff 4-14

Electrics & VZ: Referencing your response to Staff 1-29, please provide the process and actions you follow for applying for a license for a new pole or a location for a pole from a municipality (for municipal rights of way) or the state (for state rights of way), pursuant to RSA 231:159-182, inclusive.

Response:

Unitil will initiate a petition for a pole license if the pole is in its maintenance area. The following process takes place:

- a) Prepare the petitions for licenses and associated plans.
- b) Send three (3) copies to Verizon for their review and signature.
- c) Upon receiving the returned copies from Verizon, Unitil will send them to the applicable town selectman (or governing authority).
- d) Upon receiving the returned copies from the town Unitil will forward one copy to Verizon for their records and maintain one for our records.

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Request No. Staff 4-15

Electrics & VZ: Please provide samples (both presently used and historically used) of petitions to municipalities for pole licenses, including global and individual poles license petitions.

Response:

See Attachments UES-Staff 4-15 ("Historical" and "New").

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Request No. Staff 4-18

Electrics & VZ: Are you aware of any unlicensed poles in the right-of-way in the towns in your franchise areas? To the extent you are able, please quantify by town.

Response:

An internal company audit initiated earlier this year identified a number of poles that were not properly licensed, due to administrative oversight. Approximately 55 unlicensed poles remain in this category. Of these 55 poles, the majority are in Chichester (27) and in Webster (13), with smaller quantities in Concord, Boscowen, and Salisbury. All of the identified poles have had petitions for licensure generated and have been routed to joint pole owners and ultimately will be sent to the appropriate municipality for execution.

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Request No. Staff 4-19

Electrics & VZ: How does your company efficiently budget and manage utility relocations for municipal road projects. Does the process change in cases when those projects are initiated with short or no advance notice? If so, please explain how the process is different.

Response:

On a monthly basis UES receives an updated advertising schedule issued by the State of New Hampshire Department of Transportation. This schedule provides details on future state roadway and bridge improvement projects. This list and associated contacts is a critical component for UES budgeting. With respect to municipal initiated projects, UES is usually informed by the local Director of Public Works of utility relocations. These notifications, however, do not normally allow for effective budgeting, as many are needed within that same budget year as the request. In an effort to account for these unknown municipal requests, UES, on an annual basis, budgets funds for unspecified municipal projects. These budgeted funds do not necessarily cover all of the expenditures, and budgeting for a large project with short notice (same calendar year of request) may result in budget variances.

The process with respect to project management does not change if short or no advance notice is provided, but the compressed notice often results in a more complex project management task.

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Request No. Staff 4-21

Electrics, Verizon, municipalities & NHDOT: What do you recommend to improve municipal road project coordination?

Response:

More frequent and timely communications from the municipalities to UES, Verizon, and other attachees for the purpose of providing long term schedules of road relocation.

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Request No. Staff 4-22

Electrics & VZ: Provide procedures and actual practices for notifying and/or seeking permission from municipalities for emergency and routine maintenance in the right-of-way, organized by municipality.

Response:

Unitil is not aware of any requirement to notify and/or seek permission from municipalities for emergency and routine maintenance in the right-of-way, and hence does not have specific procedures or practices to do so. However local police departments are often notified and requested to provide traffic details when performing utility work within the right-of-way. In addition, local planning boards are contacted when seeking permission to perform maintenance tree trimming along a scenic road way.

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Request No. Staff 4-23

Electrics & VZ: Please provide procedures and actual practices for communication with municipalities that use the communication space on poles.

Response:

Unitil does not have any written procedures with respect to this data request.

Generally speaking, a phone conversation or face to face meeting is the normal method of communication between Unitil and a municipality when the need arises for the transfer of facilities or any other issues that may arise pertaining to the municipal attachment.

Additionally, Unitil invites all fire and police department personnel to an annual meeting for the purpose of discussing emergency restoration efforts as well as any other issues that the municipalities may have.

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Request No. Staff 4-24

Electrics, Verizon, municipalities & NHDOT: In the event that a public works project, either municipal or state, calls for utilities to temporarily relocate their facilities before moving them to their final location at a later date in the project, should the utilities be compensated for the temporary relocation work? If your answer is no, please explain why and provide the basis for your rationale, including a citation to any rule, tariff, ordinance or statute that supports your assertion.

Response:

Yes.

Person Responsible: Raymond A. Letourneau, Jr.

Date: May 12, 2006